



Arlington Heights Neighborhood Action Plan Implementation Committee

Date: January 14, 2020

Time: 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Location: ACMi, Studio A, 85 Park Avenue, Arlington Heights

Minutes

Attendance: Ali Carter, Economic Development Coordinator; Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development; Erin Zwirko, Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development; Janet O'Riordan, Old Schwamb Mill Board of Directors; Rob Davison, resident; Len Diggins, ACMi; Rachel Zsembery, Arlington Redevelopment Board; Jason Forney, resident; Julie Horvath, Century 21 Adams; Kristin Anderson, Forced Exposure; Pam Hallett, Housing Corporation of Arlington; Michael Rademacher, Director of Public Works; Paul Stanton, Sports Etc.

Guests: Jessica Mortell, Neighborways Design; Andy Rubinson, resident.

1. Approval of minutes of 11/5/19 and 12/10/19 meetings---Motion to approve by Janet O'Riordan. Seconded by Rob Davison. Unanimously approved.
2. Presentation by Jessica Mortell, Complete Streets Engineer, Neighborways Design.

Neighborways' work focuses on rapid change to streets to meet bite-sized goals. Emphasis on traffic calming through tactical urbanism and community public art. Does research with experimental treatments. Works with residents of all ages to do testing.

Started work in Somerville, now working on a more regional basis in Everett, Newton, Revere, Chelsea, Dorchester, Allston, and Newtonville. Provides communities with traffic-calming tools, branding and wayfinding assistance. Have created 6 pavement murals to date.

Revere project: \$20,000 budget at two locations in city. Public space activation, connections in the neighborhood to facilitate the work.

Chelsea project: Alleyway activation on Division Street in Chelsea to connect downtown to waterfront. Specifically including local elders in the project. Held community meetings and events. Fun party for installation day. Successfully created self-guided walking tours of downtown.

Considerations for Neighborways project location choices:
Connecting destinations and activated dead, underutilized spaces.

Paintings on pavement last 1-3 years depending on wear and use.
Pavement doesn't need to be pretreated for murals because the asphalt soaks in paint nicely.

Brainstorming project locations in Arlington Heights:

Visually tighten up intersections such as Appleton intersection, Downing Square.

Pam Hallett suggested a sculpture garden at Westminster Ave, or painting other transformer boxes in the neighborhood.

Rachel suggested pointing people to transit.

Jessica shared that red painted crosswalks are now MUTCD approved and have been proven effective in reducing speeds on arterial roadways. She also suggested that painted bump outs can be artistic. Someone asked about 3D crosswalks. Jessica knows the artist who created one locally that got national attention.

Rachel suggested something that would tie the different segments of the Arlington Heights business district together, such as a self-guided tour or a scavenger hunt. Need to think about branding and what makes the Heights a destination.

Jason suggested focusing on wayfinding and placemaking first. Then traffic calming. The first thing is to generate foot traffic. There are also a good number of unsignalized crosswalks on Mass Ave in Arlington Heights. Committee could focus on the steps from Trader Joes' down to the bikeway, and also the corner by the old Brigham's Ice Cream shop.

Space activation at or near the Old Schwamb Mill is another possibility.

Many bike connections are private. Need to identify which are public, which are private. Could work out the Sunrise connection to the bike path. The 19R Park Ave project will have a bikeway connection.

Rachel expressed interest in parklet or hosting a Parking Day in Arlington. Perhaps we could install permanent bike corrals in parking spaces

Ali noted that a representative from the ACAC will be attending our next meeting to discuss their programming plans for the Heights in 2020, and we could discuss Parking Day at that meeting.

Kristin suggested capitalizing on the bump outs near Penzey's and Wanamaker's, where she sometimes sees people congregating already.

Paul agreed that could be good location for traffic calming as people enter the Heights.

Bike parking and analysis, creating networks.

Jason suggested doing something at the Heights Depot. Ali noted that she has spoken with MBTA's service planning division and they are open to the idea of activating the depot site, but it would need to be very carefully planned and incremental.

Jessica suggested that it could serve as a mini outdoor amphitheater, which could be a destination. Rob suggested installations along the fencing that surrounds the site to brighten up the area with art. Rachel added that this would create a visual screening between the busway and the Mill Brook/Arlington Coal and Lumber.

Len would love to push for the MBTA to pilot route 77 service to Lexington Center.

The group agreed that these were good ideas that would need to be narrowed down. Could take “low hanging fruit” approach or maximal impact approach. Interventions at gathering spots outside of Penzeys, Wanamakers, and Bennett Family Eyecare could serve as proof of concept. Also act as gateways to business district. Placemaking at this point is a priority over traffic calming. Consider an intervention at Park Ave and Paul Revere Road.

Making connections between the Res and the business district.

Pilots can be done with Neighborways for around \$10,000. Pick a location that would be a good proof of concept. Unsignalized crossings are good locations as well. Focus on branding and how the Heights wants to promote itself as a destination.

3. Closing and next steps---Ali informed the committee that the next meetings would be on Tuesday February 4th and Tuesday March 3rd at 6:30 pm at ACMi.
4. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.